



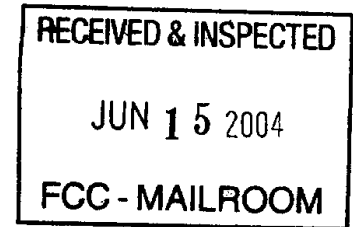
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Lois Reitzes, Program Director
WABE 90.1 FM
740 Bismark Rd NE
Atlanta, GA 30324

June 14, 2004



Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
9300 East Hampton Drive
Capitol Heights, Maryland 20743

RE: MM Docket No. 99-325

Dear Ms. Dortch,

WABE is a public radio station with a dual format of NPR news/information and Classical Music. While we take pride in being the sole provider of each format, in recent years many of our listeners have expressed frustration with the dual offering. Music devotees feel slighted that there is nowhere else on the dial in Atlanta to hear classical music, and claim that there are several choices for news and talk. Many listeners who tune to WABE for NPR news/information programs argue that "people who want music can buy CDs," but WABE is the only source for National Public Radio news and intelligent talk shows. Some of these people have moved to Atlanta from other cities where there is more than one public radio affiliate, or the public radio station has two frequencies, each devoted to a different format, and they have come to rely on public radio to provide daylong programs that are respectively talk or music.

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List A B C D E



Because funds are limited and the cost for acquiring a second frequency is much beyond our means, having a supplemental audio channel would enable us to serve many more listeners in multiple ways. Classical Music is disappearing from radio nationwide, and sadly, it has been reduced or eliminated from many school curricula. For many young people in the Atlanta area, WABE provides an educational service as an introduction to Classical Music, and in fact, may be their only source for it. Similarly, for those with physical or financial limitations who cannot attend live concert performances, Classical Music on WABE fulfills a life-enriching experience. Some of the most affecting letters we have received are from those who are hospitalized, elderly, or physically-challenged, expressing their appreciation for the solace and comfort they derive from the music aired on WABE.

With the course of global events since the World Trade Center bombing in September of 2001, a rapidly growing number of listeners rely on NPR news programs to keep them informed in a timely manner, and to provide the depth of coverage unique to National Public Radio. In Atlanta, the number of hours devoted to NPR news and talk programming is limited because of WABE's dual format. While the station offers the NPR news magazine programs daily, there are numerous shows of outstanding caliber that WABE cannot air if it is to fulfill the part of its mission dedicated to providing Classical Music. National call-in shows, news documentaries, specific programs related to health, science, and the environment are not in the line-up because of WABE's commitment to air Classical Music during the workday, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, and after 8:00 pm.

The solution to our dual-format dilemma would be the Supplemental Audio Channel.(SAC) If WABE had the capacity to multiplex, its programming could serve both constituencies, attracting a much larger audience which would provide far greater public service to the more than 4 million people in the metro area. The SAC would also enable our radio station to use existing programs in expanded fashion, and develop new, more diverse programming whose appeal may be more targeted and defined.

We strongly hope that the FCC ruling on Digital Radio and SAC will result in WABE's ability to provide diverse and far-reaching service to the greater Atlanta area.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lois Reitzes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lois" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Reitzes".

Lois Reitzes

WABE Program Director